

Local HOAs to join Loop 202 process

Citizens Advisory Team meeting again in August

By Doug Murphy
Staff Writer

When a citizens group charged with advising the state on updating the South Mountain Loop 202 Freeway plan meets again in August it will have more homeowners association representatives and a public health expert, along with a representative of the Chandler business community.

That was the decision of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team last week.

The team is made up of representatives from various groups and organizations that will be impacted by the freeway, which since 1985 was proposed where Pecos Road now runs.

Currently, the 20-member team in-

cludes a representative from the Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee, The Foothills and Lakewood HOAs, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce and the Kyrene school district.

Additional HOAs that will be asked to provide a representative to the team include Club West, Mountain Park Ranch, Foothills Reserve and developers of the Foothills 60. Four HOAs from the Laveen area will also be asked to join.

The team unanimously approved adding Jack Sellers, a retiree from Chandler, to represent the city of Chandler, East Valley Partnership and the Chandler Chamber of Commerce.

"We really need to find a way to make this move," said Sellers, who called the Loop 202 an important link in the San Tan Freeway system.

At the insistence of several Ahwatukee Foothills team members, a representative from the Arizona Public Health Association will also be added to help the team better understand the public health implications of various freeway

options.

Where to meet had caused some members from the west side to threaten to quit if meetings were held in Ahwatukee Foothills. So the team agreed to find a central location, possibly South Mountain Community College at 24th Street and Baseline Road.

The Aug. 23 meeting agenda will include an updated traffic study to show what impact the Loop 202 would have on Interstate 10 and surface streets if it is or isn't built.

Other topics for future meetings include traffic analysis, air quality, drainage and what kind of profile, above or below grade, the freeway should have.

The Arizona Department of Transportation has already tentatively approved the western route for the freeway, cutting through South Mountain Park and roughly running north along 55th Avenue to connect with I-10.

The team now has just a few months to study the eastern route, currently where Pecos Road now is, before a draft

environmental impact statement being studied by the Federal Highway Administration will be sent out for formal public comment.

"While we have quiet a bit of time, our time is limited," said Tim Tail, an ADOT spokesman.

The team was formed to advise ADOT in updating the 1985 transportation plan for the South Mountain Loop 202 from I-10 in Ahwatukee Foothills, west along Pecos Road, through South Mountain Park and then north along roughly 55th Avenue to reconnect with I-10 in the West Valley.

The \$1.1 billion project includes removing 255 homes in Ahwatukee Foothills, partly because some were built in the right of way when ADOT couldn't buy the land from developers decades ago and partly because the freeway is bigger, now projected to be 10 lanes.

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